(b) whether levy sugar is allotted to States on the basis of the projected population of 1996;

(c) if so, why Gujarat is not allotted levy sugar on this basis;

(d) whether the Gujarat Government has represented for allocation of levy sugar on the basis of population of the State as in 1997; and

(e) the decision taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) to (c) The norm for supply of levy sugar under the Public Distribution System (PDS) for most of the States UTs including Gujarat is 425 gms. per capita per month. With effect from 1.3.2000 the allotment of levy sugar is being made on the basis of the projected population as on 1.3.1999. With effect from July, 2000 the income tax assesses and their family members are to be excluded from the PDS in respect of sugar. In addition, Government also releases about one lakh tonnes of levy sugar per annum as Festival Quota which is allocated amongst the States/UTs.

(d) and (e) No representation from the Gujarat Government for such revision has been received in the Department. However, as already mentioned, allocation of levy sugar is now based on population as on 1.3.1999.

Daily Trains between Bangalore and Delhi

*671. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) how many trains are running daily between Bangalore and Delhi;

(b) whether it has come to the notice of Government that there is great demand for introducing another Bangalore-Delhi-Bangalore Superfast Express train; and

(c) if so, whether Government would take steps to introduce the same early?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) At present, one train viz. 2627/ 2628 Karnataka Express provides daily service between Delhi and Bangalore. Besides, two non-daily trains are also available as follows:—

* 2429/2430 Bangalore Rajdhani Express (four days a week).

* 6505/6506 Mysore-Nizamuddin Swarnjayanti Express (weekly).

(b)Yes, Sir. In order to cope with seasonal demand, Railways run summer special trains between Bangalore and Delhi. Also, student specials are run to cater to the students going to Bangalore to appear at various entrance examinations.

(c) Introduction of an additional direct tain between Bangalore and Delhi is not feasible at present due to operational and resource constraints.

Improving the Quality of Software Professionals

*672. SHRI DEVI PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that immediate steps are required to improve the quality of software professionals in India and increase their number to meet the future requirements of country's IT sector; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure better infrastructural facilities, including teaching faculty, in different engineering colleges whom affiliation was granted in different universities by AICTE?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The steps taken or proposed to be taken for improving the quality of IT professionals (including software professionals) are indicated in the statement.

Statement

With a view to generating quality manpower and meeting future requirement of IT sector, this Ministry has recently established the Indian Institute of Information Tecnology, Allahabad, and Indian Institute of Information Technology & Management, Gwalior. The intake in the IITs is also being increased in a phased manner to meet the future requirements of IT Sector. The All India Council for Technical Education has recently set up an All India Board for Information Technology and has also approved inclusion of Information Technology as a branch in Technical Institutions. Many engineering colleges have since introduced IT as a branch and obtained AICTE recognition. Besides AICTE is continuously emphasising the importance of various emerging areas including IT through its Quality Improvement Programme Scheme whereby around 200 teachers have had the opportunity